The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

DECEMBER, 1950

A New Creature
By JAMES CLARK BROWN

Mastering Our Fears
By RICHARD A. WOLFF

Faith for Our Time
By HARRIET-LOUISE H. PATTERSON

God Was In Christ
By JOSEPH S. JOHNSTON

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'Full-Time' Christian Service
By ALLAN EASTON

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*
Garland Evans Hopkins, *Managing Editor*

Entered as second-class matter May 14, 1942, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyrighted 1950 by Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5. Published monthly, 25 cents a copy. $2.50 a year.

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Pulpit Calendar

Dec. 3—Advent Sunday; Day of Dedication and Prayer celebrating the creation of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
Dec. 4-12—Hanukah (Jewish).
Dec. 10—Second Sunday in Advent; Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 17—Third Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24—Sunday before Christmas; Christmas Eve.
Dec. 25—Christmas.
Dec. 31—Sunday after Christmas; New Year's Eve (Watch Night).
Jan. 1—New Year's Day; Festival of the Christening.
Jan. 5—Twelfth Night; Epiphany Eve.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 7—First Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 7-14—Universal Week of Prayer
Jan. 14—Second Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 19—Lee's Birthday.
Jan. 21.—Third Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 28—Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 1—National Freedom Day.
Feb. 2—Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.
Feb. 4—Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 7—Ash Wednesday
Feb. 9—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 11—First Sunday in Lent; Race Relations Day.
Feb. 12—Lincoln's Birthday.
Feb. 18—Second Sunday in Lent; Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 18-25—Brotherhood Week.

SEASONS: Advent, Epiphany and Lent.

ALTAR COLORS: Advent to Christmas Eve, violet; Christmas through Epiphany season, white; Lent, violet.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

For the Record—

Who are the preachers of the present generation who stand out as most representative of the best in contemporary preaching? Who are the men scattered throughout Protestantism in every section of the country who are recognized as having a special message and special ability to draw people to hear that messagae? Who are the pace-setters among America's more than 100,000 Protestant clergymen?

For some months now the Christian Century Foundation has been trying to get the answers to those questions. When we first began to plan for the new Pulpit—which makes its first appearance next month—we decided that we should try to find those men and bring them into an active relationship with this journal. We believe that the new Pulpit will be to the field of preaching what the *Saturday Review of Literature* is to the field of letters. Sermons are literature. Sermon-making is a highly specialized field of literary endeavor. We therefore felt that a publication presenting the best in contemporary preaching must have associated with it the men who are generally recognized as masters of the art of preaching.

To find out who these men were was not an easy task. Myriads of letters, telephone calls and personal interviews with denominational leaders, fellow pastors and Protestant leaders whose acquaintance stretches across denominational lines and is countrywide in its scope have been necessary. In addition, we have attempted to learn the same facts about other English-speaking areas of the world. The result is that on the masthead of the January Pulpit will appear the names of more than 25 new editorial associates. As this is written, with a few still to be heard from only one minister has felt it necessary to decline to serve, and that because he felt he could not undertake the load of work which we have made plain this selection carries with it.

There have been other lists of representative American preachers compiled in the past. The criticism of such lists has usually been that only a few denominations or preachers in the heavily populated eastern seaboard and north central sections of the country had a chance for inclusion. No doubt our list will be criticized for omitting some names that belong there. It is not an infallible list. But it will not be open to criticism either on its denominational or geographical exclusiveness. And it is an index to great preaching in America that is susceptible to change. The editorial associates will be elected each year. G.E.H.

VOLUME XXI
NUMBER 12

THE PULPIT

CHICAGO
DECEMBER, 1950

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

LESS than a decade ago Protestantism began to awake to the importance and appropriateness of observing its own birthday. The idea has now spread throughout the country, and few are the churches and communities where the day passes without sermons and union services of celebration. Of course, the "day" is the the Sunday nearest October 31 (when Luther, in 1517, nailed his 95 theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg), but the observance of this event has been extended to the season beginning in mid-October and extending into mid-November according to local convenience. I am writing this toward the end of a series of six Reformation Day celebrations, from Florida to San Francisco, and the experience glows with gratitude and hope. Protestants are becoming "Protestant-conscious." The conviction that the things we cherish as Protestants are far more important than those which distinguish us denominationally is drawing the churches together. I wish to pay a tribute here to the state and city councils of churches. It is under their auspices that most of these birthday events are organized. This is the easiest of all their undertakings. But for the rest of the year these state and city councils have hard sledding. No servant of the churches has a more difficult task than the executive secretaries of these state and city councils. The local churches have not yet awakened to the just and imperative claims of united Protestantism upon them for cooperative and financial support. But every annual observance of Reformation Day leaves behind it an appreciable increase in the feeling that Protestant solidarity deserves no second place among the great Christian causes.

Reformation Day Now Well Established

The Book of the Month

TODAY IS MINE, *by Thomas Curtis Clark. Harper, $1.50*

OF making many books for the guidance of private and family devotion there seems to be no end. But I predict that we shall wait a long time for one that so completely satisfies our spiritual, ethical and intellectual needs as does this latest one to appear. Mr. Clark has harvested prayers and themes and poems from every field of Christian lore—classic and contemporary—and has set them before us in the frame of each day of the year, 365 pages, a page for every day. Here is a literature of devotion infused with lofty sentiment but utterly devoid of sentimentalism. The general arrangement follows that of *The Daily Altar,* the devotional volume prepared by the late Herbert L. Willett and myself and published more than thirty years ago. Not until I opened and read Mr. Clark's book have I been willing to concede that *The Daily Altar* has been improved upon by any more recent book of devotion. I cannot withhold the tribute of pre-eminence which the work of this famous poet-author so clearly deserves. Mr. Clark's own verses have quickened the heartbeat of Christian faith in God only knows how great a multitude. I suppose that his poems are more often and more widely quoted in sermons than those of any other singer of our times. How the house of Harper could afford to produce and sell this sizable book for only $1.50 passes my understanding—unless they expect its circulation to reach a half-million copies. It will not surprise me if it attains, and it should surpass, that goal.

A Thought for the Month

DO WE NOT conceive public worship too much as a private individual act? This it truly is, but it is more. It is a corporate act, an act of the whole Christian community celebrating perennially the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. I like to think of it as indeed a celebration. The man who claims that he can worship God in the solitude of the woods no doubt expresses a reality of the Christian faith, but it is not the same reality as the public worship of the gathered congregation. Worship should be distinguished from private prayer or meditation. We must outgrow that form of individualism which locates the whole of the Christian experience in the inner life. The Christian faith is something more. It calls for a communal celebration. The church is the community of this experience and this faith. Worship is the public celebration of the great facts of the gospel upon which the Christian community must ever nourish its life. Worship is the Christian community, as such, offering itself to God. The church lives in and by its corporate worship as well as by its inner personal dedication. Without this public celebration of the Christian faith, we may be sure that personal piety and devotion will evaporate into illusion and sentimentalism. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" is as truly an injunction of the gospel as, "Enter into thy closet . . . and pray to thy Father . . . in secret."

Public Worship a Corporate Act

Charles Clayton Morrison

'A New Creature'

By JAMES CLARK BROWN

He destined us in love to be his sons.—Eph. 1:5.

THERE was a day when the poet Robert Burns, in company with a friend, watched from a shelter along the coast a storm at sea. The water moved madly into shore, throwing itself in turbulent heaps against the rocks, rising high in a burst of spray, retreating swiftly again to the open sea. They watched in silent fascination for a time until at last Burns' friend exclaimed, "Is not that a scene to write about?" "Aye," replied the poet, "but it's more than a word can say."

One always feels something of the vastness of the sea whenever one endeavors to say, "Behold, see what wondrous things God has done." Do we understand that no drama in all history compares with the sweep and majesty of the Christian story? The writer to the Hebrews apologizes for his briefness but is nonetheless concerned that you and I remember the long history and high heroism of the company in which we stand. He takes a long look back and recalls the faith of Abraham, who, when God called, went, "not knowing where he was to go." You and I stand in the succession of Moses, who, "when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin." Your faith and mine is an inheritance from a people who daringly fled Egyptian tyranny, "braved exiles, endured a wilderness"—nameless saints "who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, . . . won strength out of weakness, put foreign armies to flight"; that invincible legion which triumphed over cruelty with courage, over persecution with patience, and over death itself by dying. Is not that a scene to write about? Aye! But it's more than a word can say.

The backdrop, then, of God's amazing grace should be the setting for any contemplation of what we have been called to be: a new creature in Christ. For of God's mighty act, not ours, did such a hope first dawn. By his act, not ours, shall the dawn become noonday bright.

Thus, in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul gives us our central text. Writing to a group of churches concerning the Christian faith he says to them:

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love, to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

All of which is the Apostle Paul's moving and eloquent way of saying that our hope for becoming a new creature involves a dream in the mind of God, a rebellion in the will of man and a reconciliation in the cross of Christ.

GOD'S DREAM FOR US

Hear again the first words of the apostle. "God chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ." That is the dream in the mind of God—that you and I should become sons and daughters of the Most High. Unto that end hath he ceaselessly set his hand. Thus when we come to understand rightly what is meant by the love of God we shall see how far removed it is from the indulgent, soft and sentimental thing which we so often make of it. What does it mean to be loved of God? To be loved of God is to be loved of one whose purpose within that love is to make out of creatures like you and me, sons and daughters like himself, holy, righteous, one in whom no darkness dwells. Such love allows suffering, requires discipline, but only because it is holy love aimed at making of us children of God. It should always be remembered that he whose life was truly God's wound up not only with a "peace of mind" but a piece of wood on which he was crucified.

Do we see then that the purpose of God's love is not so much to make us "happy" as it is to make us good? C. S. Lewis has suggested a human analogy.

> When we fall in love, do we cease to care whether the one we love is clean or dirty, fair or foul? Do we not rather then first begin to care? Does any woman regard it as a sign of love in a man that he neither knows nor cares how she is looking? Love may, indeed, love the beloved when her beauty is lost: but not because it is lost. Love may forgive all infirmities and love still in spite of them: but love cannot cease to will their removal. Love is more sensitive than hatred itself to every blemish in the beloved . . . Of all powers God forgives most, but he condones least: he is pleased with little but demands all.

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To be loved of God is to be judged of God, and he will take no rest from his disturbing judgment until we too say Yes to his holy dream.

What we have said thus far might suggest that God loves us because of some need or lack within his nature. You and I love one another by reason of desire and need. But the omnipotent God has no needs. "God is goodness. He can give good, but cannot need or get it. In that sense all his love is as it were bottomlessly selfless by very definition; it has everything to give and nothing to receive." Yet God by his own act of unspeakable humility has ordained within himself a need which can be gratified only by loving and being loved by you and me. As Faber's hymn puts it:

> Oh how I fear Thee, living God,
> With deepest, tenderest fears,
> And worship Thee with trembling hope
> And penitential tears!
>
> Yet I may love Thee too, O Lord,
> Almighty as Thou art,
> For Thou has stooped to ask of me
> The love of my poor heart.

It was this truth which overwhelmed the apostle's mind and soul. Time and again he stands absolutely awed by what he speaks of as "the grace of God," "the faithfulness of God," "the love of God." "If God is for us," he exclaims, "who is against us?" He who, for no reason save that He is that kind of God "destined us in love to be his sons."

REBELLION OF WILL

Look now at the fact that we have sought to deny God's dream by our rebellion of will. It is only when we understand what we have been called to be that we confess the sin of what we are. "If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and his word is not in us." St. John said that. "I do not understand my own actions. . . . For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." St. Paul said that. "Whatever we are, we are not what we ought to be." St. Augustine said that. Always it is the saint who knows the real ugliness of his sin. Modern man has lost his consciousness of sin because he has lost his consciousness of God. He does not understand the idea of "a rebellion in the will of man" because he acknowledges no will outside his own. He has, in Henley's phrase, become "the master of his fate," "the captain of his soul."

It is important to try to understand why man has come so to believe. Rienhold Niebuhr has suggested the answer in these words:

> [Once] man was primitive, living a mean, beastly, brutish existence, finding a few fruits from the trees, having skins for his clothes, living precariously. Then he learns to put domestic animals to use; humbly he starts to till the soil; gradually he learns the crafts; he develops commerce and industry; then during the last two hundred years he acquires more and more technical knowledge and power. Man is growing strong. This is man's life and this is history as known to modern culture, and there is no need for the old irrelevant story of salvation."

So the chorus of the 20th century rings out in sober parody of the Psalmist:

> O man, modern man, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of chemists and statesmen hast thou ordained strength because of thy wisdom. When I consider thy heavens, which thou hast filled with supersonic planes, the work of thy fingers, Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the moon and the stars, which thou hast weighed, analyzed and fully comprehended, what is God, that thou art mindful of him?

We have rebelled against God through the pride of a pretended wisdom!

We are tremendously tempted, however, mistakenly to view this whole matter in such vague and general terms as "modern man" and his "culture" and fail to see that behind such generalities lies a personal failure. "The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our culture, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." God confronts each of us like Nathan before David, saying: "Thou art the man!" Behold then our sin—our conscious choice of evil when we know the good, the secret pride we nourish and the pride we constantly reveal, our envy of another's life, the excuses we make for our own, our holy pretenses and our prayerless lives, the days we have lived as if Jesus had not. What but the mind of God doth know them all? We have then in our rebellion of will sought to say No to the dream of God.

CHRIST IS OUR REDEMPTION

Yet consider now how grievously we err to speak of sin as if it were the final and therefore fatal condition of man. Canon Raven has humorously though truthfully reminded us that there are theologies "which confront us with an inverted Pharisaism that prides itself on its own damnation, exalts Satan as lord of the earth, and thanks God for the good news of original sin." Whereas in truth the good news is that God in the fullness of time sent forth his Son. And "in him," says Paul, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us." The Son of God became man in order that man might become the son of God. This he has achieved by his incarnation of holy love. What is our need? Our need is to be forgiven, and only holy love can forgive. He who was without sin identified himself not only with our life but with our sin, and offering himself as a ransom for many made in our behalf our peace with God.

We sometimes speak glibly of God's willingness to forgive. Do we know what we say? A forgiveness easily granted is the act of a shallow, uncaring, indifferent love. The holy God can remain holy yet forgiving only by himself suffering for our sin which is the death of the cross.

Consider too that it is not only in the death of Christ but in his resurrection and continuing ministry within us that we are redeemed. "Christ in you, the hope of glory," says Paul. Salvation comes not only in that, for us, Christ died, but in that, in us, Christ lives. Christ, the Bridegroom, has eternally wedded himself

to the human race, and he will seek no divorce and accept no release from intercession in our behalf until we too love him who first and forever loves us. In Dr. Maltby's words:

> On Calvary [Christ] betrothed himself forever to the human race, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health. . . . It is not [simply] what God once was, or Christ once did, that can save us; but what Christ once did is the sacrament and visible pledge to us of what he is and does forever, and shows to us, each one, if we will, the God with whom we have to do. . . . We know what it means to wash our hands of a person, but we have no word for the opposite thing.

It is this "opposite thing" to which God in Christ has committed himself—"the task of recovering all humanity unto himself, however long it might take, however arduous the way, however unrewarding the toil."

GOD'S LOVE REVEALED

Much of what I am trying to say may be illustrated in an experience of the English pastor Leslie Weatherhead. He tells how one night, aboard a ship in the Mediterranean, they passed quite close to Stromboli, an island volcano which rises sheer out of the sea.

> It was after dinner and almost dark. Suddenly there was a great burst of flame from the crater at the summit. Huge tongues of flame shot up hundreds of feet into the sky, lighting up the ocean for miles around. Tons of molten rock were thrown up into the air. Through our glasses it was possible to distinguish red-hot boulders racing down the mountainside, and gradually a stream of lava forced its way almost to the sea. For many hours—when our vessel had slipped westward toward the last lingering light of sunset which lay upon the horizon, when the bold outline of Stromboli was lost in the gathering shadows of night—that red-hot stream of lava, like some awful, open wound, gashed the darkness. What did it mean? It meant that for a few hours there had been revealed those great fires which had been burning in the mountain's heart since the foundation of the world.

The cross itself is the supreme event in all of history. But it speaks of something greater still. It speaks of God's everlasting love as revealed in Christ—his love that will continue to seek and suffer as long as one life remains outside the embrace of God!

If then the world says, "If God were good, the sin of the earth would break his heart," we answer, pointing to Calvary, "See his breaking heart!" If the world says, "If this kind of universe with its griefs and graves is somehow necessary for our growth, then God, if he were good, would at least share its pain with us," we answer, pointing to him upon the cross, "See God sharing our pains!" If the world says, "If God is love, then in compassion he will bear our sins as only God can," we answer, "Behold him bearing our sins! Behold in Calvary that travail which God bears from the foundation of the world and will forever bear until at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

A Pastoral Prayer

By FREDRICH REST

Pastor, St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church
Hermann, Mo.

Praise and Thanksgiving

ALMIGHTY GOD, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank thee that thou art ever calling us to come to thee in prayer and praise. O thou who alone art worthy of our wholehearted praise day after day, we confess that we are not able to ascribe all the honor and glory that are due thee, for thou art all-powerful, all-wise and all-gracious.

Confession

We beseech thee to hear thy children who are prone to self-exaltation. Since our hearts and lips do not always agree, and we love neither thee nor our fellow men as we ought, we earnestly implore thee to forgive us. Enable us to love thee with all our heart. Help us to know in our inmost being that thou alone art God, and that we should adore thee far above all that we admire. Restore thy image in us that we may walk in all lowliness and tranquility, reflecting the spirit of Him who served humbly as he went about doing good. Cause us to be truly humble that we may be filled with thy grace.

For the Church

Give to all professing Christians throughout the world a faith that never slumbers and a love that never fails. Empower us to build the household of faith on the foundation of our Savior. Make all churches of all denominations live and move and have their being in thy great Spirit of love and truth.

For Individuals

Since our sufficiency is of thee, O God, we beseech thee to hear our prayers for the sick in body, the distressed in mind and the anxious in spirit. Continue the work of healing broken bodies and minds; assure those who suffer that thou dost care for them. Give calmness of spirit to all who are troubled. Bestow upon them that perfect love which casts out fear. Give a double portion of grace to those who feel the sting of unjust treatment from their round of work and activities. Encourage all to face life's problems and uncertainties, and grant us power to live as unselfish servants.

(Here Special Intercessions May Be Offered)

Final Praise

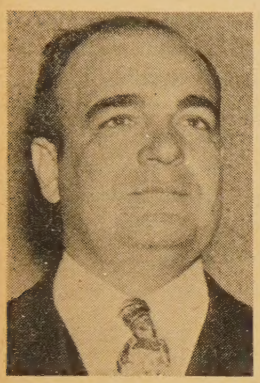
We humbly ask for these blessings in the spirit of grateful children who have received countless gifts before this moment. Grant the requests which are in accordance with thy holy will; and to thee we shall ever seek to ascribe the praise, honor and glory which are due thee, now and always. Amen.

Mastering Our Fears

By RICHARD A. WOLFF

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.—I John 4:18.

ALL of us have fears. Those who would say No do not know themselves. We are afraid of ourselves, afraid of others, afraid of the future, afraid of unemployment, afraid of high places, afraid of public opinion; and so we might go on, only to prove that fear is the common property of us all. Fear can properly be termed Public Enemy No. 1; yes; also Private Enemy No. 1; for out of fear comes a vast host of other evils, such as hatred, loneliness, mental illness. What we fear we hate, and what we hate we seek to kill in one way or another, and in the process we destroy ourselves. We all want love and friendship, but because of fear we set up a barrier of insulation that makes free communication with others impossible and leaves us in a well of loneliness. Fear also causes mental illness. As Dr. Harold W. Ruopp of Chicago has pointed out, it poisons the whole system as much as arsenic, and is much more progressive in its influence.



Some fears are good. The fear of ill health drives us to consult a physician. The fear of ignorance urges us to seek an education. The fear of adverse social conditions spurs us on to work for social improvement. Fear is like fire—a fine servant but a terrible master. Our problem, then, is not to get rid of fears, for they are an important part of our human mechanism. Rather, our problem is that of learning to master our fears in a Christian way.

Consider, then, how we can master our three basic fears.

FEAR OF OURSELVES

First, there is the fear of ourselves. How many of us are afraid of ourselves! We are afraid that when some crisis comes or some temptation confronts us, we will break down. We have forgotten how tough the human mechanism is. We have lost sight of our own mental and spiritual resources.

Then, too, we are afraid of what we are not. We cannot accept our limitations, and we become fearful. Where did we get the ideas that we must be all-powerful, master of every situation, that life must be made up of all successes and no failures? Most of them go back to our childhood. The stories we read, the radio programs we listened to nearly always depicted the hero as someone who was extremely powerful, always victorious, and almost never a failure. We carry these patterns over into adulthood. Then, confronted with the realities of life—rebuffs, failures, frustrations and so on—we find it hard to accept our own limitations, and we interpret them in terms of personal failure. We must accept our limitations and see that life is full of setbacks for everyone. We can change and rise above them.

Sometimes this fear of ourselves has its origin in a guilty conscience. We are afraid of the wrong we have done. The one cure for such fear is to rectify the wrong and to live a righteous and clean life.

FEAR OF OTHERS

Second, we are not only afraid of ourselves, but we are also afraid of other people. We are afraid of those who are superior to us and who expose us, mentally and morally. When we find others superior, our egos are deflated and we become fearful of losing our reputation. The natural reaction is one of hatred toward those who have caused this situation.

We are afraid of public opinion and we like others to think well of us. We try our best to build ourselves up in the eyes of others and to measure ourselves with other people's yardsticks.

Wise is the person who realizes that he does not have to measure up to the yardstick of another who, when all is said and done, is as fallible as he. We are so afraid of what people will think that we go in a wild circle to please this one and that one, and finally end up by displeasing ourselves. Where did we get this idea that we must be so concerned about what people will think? Certainly not from the New Testament. Only when we can bring ourselves to the point where we do not care what people will think can we really master our fears. It does not matter what people think because half of the people don't really think anyway. And half of those who do think, think illogically.

Then we are afraid of other folks who excel and surpass us and who threaten our security. This fear takes the form of jealousy, and how deeply rooted that feeling can become! Jealousy can gnaw at the very depths of our souls. Have you ever been jealous of your neighbor, your competitor, your friend? If so, more than likely it is because you are not big enough to accept his superiority. For jealousy, there is but one cure, found in our Scripture: "There is no fear in love, for perfect love casteth out fear." Yes, the love of God in our hearts; a love that is big enough to allow us to take second place graciously—that is a sure cure for jealousy.

RICHARD A. WOLFF has been pastor of the First Parish of Westwood United Church since 1944. He is chairman of the committee on social action of the Massachusetts Congregational conference. His special interest is pastoral counseling.

Perfect love casteth out jealousy, which is a by-product of fear.

FEAR OF THE FUTURE

Finally, we are afraid not only of ourselves and others; but we are also afraid of the future and of death. We dread the change and the uncertainty of life. Change is uncomfortable and shakes us out of our chosen paths. We like to adhere to the static because it is more comfortable and much easier. But all of life is a process of change. Our fear of the future, then, is tied up with a fear of life itself.

When we are at one with God, God is in us and we are in him. Our lives are related with his, and this partnership can withstand all change. This is the sure basis for our faith in immortality. We are a part of the universe, and no change can alter that. It is this kind of faith that can give us true courage to live above fear of the future and fear of death. The person who lives in true godliness and righteousness has the assurance of everlasting arms that are always beneath him.

The God who created us everlastingly loves us, and therefore will never destroy us. He will go with us through change, even the change of death itself. His love is everlasting, and it is this perfect love that casts out the fear of the future and the fear of death.

Yes, we all have fears; but we can master our fear of ourselves, our fear of other people, and our fear of the future.

This whole matter of fear is to us a clear indication that God is with us through all of life. That is, the mere fact that we fear ill health is an indication that God intended us to have good health. The fact that we fear loneliness is an indication that God did not intend us to be alone. The fact that we fear punishment proves that God did not intend us to do wrong. And so we might go on to point out that God undergirds all of life. He is with us in all of life. What better evidence could we have for the ever living, ever present God? This is the final assurance against all fear: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The perfect love of God for us is the final answer to all fears. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear."

'Faith for Our Time'

By HARRIET-LOUISE H. PATTERSON

HAVE you ever seen a mustard tree? I'll never forget the first one I saw. A few years ago, upon my first visit to Jerusalem, a friend took me one morning to a place outside and north of the city wall, which is known as Gordon's Calvary. He pulled a rope hanging beside a heavy door, setting some little bells atinkle over our heads. It quickly brought the red-faced Scots caretaker from his pottering inside to invite us to enter a restful, beautiful garden.

I looked around me with a good deal of curiosity, because, if this identification for Calvary is correct, then it was in this place that Jesus was crucified; and, where Easter morning first broke in glory, there is still a garden. Yes, a garden riotous with rosemary and rue, pansies and daisies, blossoming shrubs, little round gray-green olive trees and cactus plants.

In the bright morning sunshine, the three of us walked together in perfume-scented air along paths laid out neatly among growing spring flowers and lovely green trees toward a low door in a far, tan wall. That was our destination—the Garden Tomb at Gordon's Calvary.

THE MUSTARD TREE

Upon reaching there, my attention was caught by a graceful tree growing to the left of the ancient Jewish sepulcher. It was about four feet high with a fairly sturdy trunk; it had dainty pale-green leaves and attractive bright yellow blossoms which hung in clusters from a thread of a stem, like small golden trumpets. As we came up, a flock of birds were resting quietly on its graceful branches, but, disturbed while we stood there, one by one they started a brief song and then winged off to other parts of the garden. I had no idea of the tree's identity and I asked what it could be.

"It is a mustard tree," the Scotsman answered. "Indeed, it has grown in a single season from 'the least of all the seeds.' "

From his pocket he drew a small packet and opened it. "Hold out your hand," he directed. I did so, and to my surprise onto my palm rolled hundreds of the tiniest, shiny black seeds. At my astonishment that he should have actual mustard seeds to show visitors while looking at an actual mustard tree, he explained how every year he gathered and later packaged these smallest of all seeds to give or send to friends around the world. We had interrupted him at that job that morning!

I singled out a tiny seed. A mustard seed—a mustard tree. I looked from one to the other. I thought to myself: What a parable of life Jesus, who lived all his 33 years in Palestine among these two commonplaces of

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everyday life, saw in a tiny mustard seed. It is the smallest of seeds. Yet it has wrapped up within it the possibilities of expanding life, of becoming a truly beautiful, flower-bearing, fruit-bearing tree. As a wee thing, it is loaded with imprisoned power ready to burst forth when the environment is favorable. When put into the soil, the striking characteristic of a mustard seed is that it can grow—grow until it becomes something entirely new and so much larger. In fact, the wee seed can grow until it becomes a fruit-bearing tree, a sturdy, strong, self-sustaining tree in which even flocks of birds may be sheltered.

Through the centuries, men have written a great deal about faith. Jesus himself was always talking about faith, but nothing, nothing more significant has been written or spoken on this subject than on the day that Jesus likened the potentialities of the mustard seed to the principle of faith—a faith that makes everything possible.

It happened when Jesus' disciples had tried but failed in an attempt to heal the epileptic son of a man who had sought a cure of them. Then he brought his son to Jesus, and Jesus healed him. Afterwards, when the disciples asked Jesus why they had failed to cure him, Jesus spoke of their need of prayer and of a vital faith; and he said, "I tell you truly, if you had faith the size of a grain of mustard seed"—which, though small, is alive and grows—"you could say to this hill, 'Move from here to there,' and remove it would; nothing would be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20, Moffatt translation).

No more than a mustard seed under favorable conditions is faith constant in quantity or quality, but it changes and grows in the light of a growing knowledge of spiritual things. Faith in God grows as people commune with him, as they become certain that God is at work in their lives and in the world. This is the faith needed for our time.

"WHAT ELSE DO I WANT?"

Recently I was in London. I heard the story of two native boys who had come there from the Ruanda Mission in Africa to give their Christian testimony. Coming to this great throbbing heart of the British empire, they were disturbed when they reached that large city not to find someone to meet them and take them to their destination. Not knowing what to do among so many strange faces, amid strange surroundings and a strange language, one of them looked for a quiet corner where he could lay his problem before God. Just as he was rising from praying knees, he heard someone say, "Herbert, what are you doing here? The last time I saw you was in the heart of Africa."

He looked around and there stood a missionary, who had been locating her lost luggage. After telling his personal experience in faith, my informer said the youth concluded his testimony with these confident words: "The Lord is my shepherd: what else do I want?"

What a testimony of faith!

Have we that same confident faith? That for each of us there is always God, in whom are infinite resources and power, and therefore we act as if he cares for us and will never let us down? Do we go through each day carrying on our duties with the confidence that nothing is going to happen to us which will be more than we can meet with God's help? That kind of faith grows and flourishes only if we frequently meditate upon God's Word, seek his guidance through prayer and offer ourselves to him in service.

Columbus' faith that the world was round enabled him to discover a new continent. Men's faith that "a government of the people, by the people, for the people" could be established kept them working upon the task until they brought forth upon this continent "a new nation." Edison's faith that the phonograph, the electric light and other things that are taken for granted today could be perfected kept him trying. This was Edison's faith: "I believe that for every problem God has given us, he has a solution."

We are living in a world of human need—millions homeless, hungry and underclad; millions living in fear of poverty, disease or war; everywhere hatred and suspicion rampant among both individuals and nations. Such a condition ought to drive us to our knees in a virtual agony of prayer, there to become more certain of our faith.

It takes faith to believe we can have a better life, a better world, or that a world Christian community is possible. If we are to achieve any degree of personal peace of mind, if world peace, understanding and international good will are to be realized, we shall need to use what little faith we already have and with that begin to acquire more; we shall have to begin *now* to

Expect great things from God.
Attempt great things for God.

Possessing that kind of genuine, active, growing faith, we can confront the world's mountains of fear, doubt, debt, sorrow, strife, intolerance or irreligion, which hinder the establishment of a Christian world, and command them to "remove hence," and it shall be done.

Prayer for America

By THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

America, our native land,
God made thee wondrous fair,
A land of plenty, of good will,
A home beyond compare.
God keep thee, our America,
A realm of truth and right.
May haughty despot ne'er despoil
Nor shroud our land in night.

Not unto us the glory, Lord,
For power on land and sea.
Thine be the praise who made us great,
Who gave us liberty.
Without thee we would build in vain
The walls 'tis ours to raise.
Forsake us not. Be thou our might
Through all the coming days.

God Was In Christ

By JOSEPH S. JOHNSTON

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.—II Corinthians 5:19.

IN the fourteenth chapter of Acts the people are described as jubilantly shouting, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" At least, this is suggestive of a Christmas text and, if changed slightly, becomes exactly the refrain of the Christmas season—*God has come down to us in the likeness of man.*

This is the theme with which Paul was dealing when he wrote to the Corinthians that "God was in Christ," and it is one of the most marvelous facts of Christian experience. No stretch of the imagination suffices to conceive what our life would be like if God had not come down through the singing skies to dwell as the child of Mary and Joseph in their humble home at Nazareth.

Certainly, we would find ourselves today without inner peace, or hope, or love in our world—if, indeed, we had even the gift of life; for these things came from God when he gave us Jesus Christ.

Love came down at Christmas
Love all lovely, love divine,
Love came down at Christmas
Star and angels gave the sign.
(*Christina Rossetti*)

But have you ever pondered why Love came down? What was the earthly situation, or what was the heavenly plan that, in the fullness of time, put a wandering star into the eastern sky and the Christ-Child in a manger at Bethlehem?

LOVE IS THE ANSWER

For more than fifteen centuries the great minds of the ages have sought to explain just *how* this was done. Fortunately, we do not have to possess the answer to this in order to enjoy the full splendor of Christmas. It is enough for us to know that, long years ago, o'er Bethlehem's hills, were seen these wondrous things and, in faith, to accept them as a marvelous expression of God's love.

If, however, Christmas is to be lifted for us out of its usual pattern of commercialism and pure sentimentalism, we must have some satisfying answer to that other question, *why* this thing was done. Why should the Lord of Life have deigned to come down to earth, taking upon himself the form of a man? Why should there ever have been a Christmas Day?

The answer is not far to seek. It is, in fact, as near as the heart of every parent who loves his child. Let us go back to the beginning of time that I may show you what I mean.

In Genesis we read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Then it was that God conceived the thought of making the worlds. He made the dry lands and gathered together the seas. "And God saw that it was good." He brought forth out of the earth grass, and herb, and fruit tree. Then he made the two great lights, "and he made the stars also." He made the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, "and every living creature." At long last, God was ready to climax his work, and "God said, 'Let us make man.' . . . In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good." And God planned for it to stay that way.

MAN DISAPPOINTED GOD

Alas, not all even of God's plans have worked out well. He also knows what disappointment is!

Have you ever held a wee baby in your arms—bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh—and dreamed dreams of all the fine things he should be and of all the great things he should do? Above all, have you planned as you held him there in your arms the many years of growing fellowship you two would have together—schooldays and vacation days, long winter nights in conversation, summer days in travel; laughing and crying and working and playing together, always in a growing camaraderie? Have you ever done that? Then, for a little while, you have stood where God stood when he made man in his own image and breathed into him the breath of life. You have relived the experience of the First Parent as he looked into the face of the first child.

Yet some of you have lived to see these early dreams betrayed. The life that was to have been so beautiful has grown twisted and warped. The blemish of worldly sophistication has marred the sheen of character. Though love has been lavished, so little of it has been returned, and the joy of intimate fellowship is still only a dream. Has it broken your heart? And would you give almost life itself to make the first beautiful dream come true? God felt that way too. His heart was also broken. It happened in this wise:

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Having made man in his own image—that is, given him personality—God also gave him limited freedom. He could make choices, and thus have moral responsibility. God would not have his child acting like some puppet in response to his divine stimulation. He must have the dignity born of freedom. He must choose and be held accountable for the choices he made. God knew that evil might creep into life through man's wrong choices, but that was a risk he took to make man morally strong. He hoped, as only a parent who is devoted to his child can hope, that his son would do only that which was good.

MAN CHOSE EVIL

But this child chose evil. He did the one thing God asked him not to do. And, through disobedience, evil became a part of God's world. It broke the heart of God, not alone because it marred the beauty of his creation, but because it estranged his beloved.

See how vividly the story is told in Genesis. At the close of each day God had been wont to walk in the garden. Adam and Eve had come romping and laughing along the wooded paths to greet him. God had rejoiced at their confidence and they were happy to see him coming. They looked forward with eagerness to the cool of each day when they would see him.

Then came sin. God comes as he has been wont to do. No laughter greets him. He calls, "Adam, where art thou?" There is no answer. Adam has hid himself.

It is a primitive story, to be sure, but how much it holds of truth! Sin is the same in every age; its history is one of estrangement. It estranged the children of Eden from their environment. It estranged them from each other. It estranged them from their Father. It was this last that broke the heart of God. What could he do? By what device could God make of man what, in his heart, he wanted man to be? How could he re-establish perfect goodness in the life of the child he had made?

A thousand years are but as a day with him, and through all these years God worked to root out evil and to woo his loved one. Because of his very nature, he waged an implacable warfare against sin on the one hand and an untiring courtship of man on the other.

GOD SENT HIS SON

As the mind of man is able to comprehend, we see God breaking into life, in the experience of his servants, to reveal himself and make known his will. Abraham, Jacob, Moses all knew what it was to be instructed by God. But instruction was partial, for their understanding was dull.

Then came the Laws—Moses on Sinai; later the noble judges; then the prophets. How they march through the Old Testament, proclaiming the will of God—scolding, threatening, chiding, forgiving, wooing, suffering—trying to reconcile man to God! But all to little avail. Man disobeyed the moral laws; he ignored the judges; he stoned the prophets.

At last God is driven to an extremity of action. "I will send my son. Surely they will hear him."

Thus,

> Long years ago, o'er Bethlehem's hills
> Was seen a wondrous thing,
> As shepherds watched their sleeping flocks
> They heard the angels sing.
>
> The Anthem rolled among the clouds
> When earth was hushed and still;
> Its notes proclaimed sweet peace on earth
> To all mankind good will.
>
> (*Leigh R. Brewer*)

But behind the peace of Bethlehem, the drama of the wise men and the kings; behind the quiet wonder of the shepherds and the music of the angels, one can sense the agony of God.

How these wondrous things happened, we may never understand; *why* they happened, we must never forget.

Christmas is the reminder that God was so concerned about our frustrations, our sins, our separation, that he did something tremendous about it. He came down to our dark world in the person of Jesus Christ. He became accessible, understandable, lovable. We beheld him, whom to know is life, and life eternal. He talked to us about our sin. He promised us forgiveness. He gave us power to become true sons. And when we have beheld his glory and understood his love, we have been changed. The miracle still goes on. For God was (and is) in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

A Prayer

By EDWARD J. VORBA
Pastor, First Congregational Church
Bradford, Vermont

FATHER of spirits, Lord of our souls, into our hearts comes now a portion of that spirit which fills this time. It is the spirit of outpouring love and never ceasing care and concern of Christ that is thine own spirit. Now in these moments and in these weeks may every selfish passion and desire be stilled. May the mind that was in thy Son be in us. May the love that was in his acts fill our lives.

In these moments our hearts reach out to all this weary world. Their compassion and sympathy would penetrate the darkness and bleakness that is everywhere. Their light of love would brighten and subdue all the suspicions and hatreds that are abroad.

We think now of the struggling church in Great Britain and its austere and grappling faith;

Of the darkened church on the continent of Europe with its ruined buildings and lives, its displaced persons both of geography and ideals, its new challenges to be met by its weakened resources, both material and spiritual;

Of the church behind the iron curtain where our acts of love and prayers of faith cannot be barred;

Of the church in the Near East where new trials and

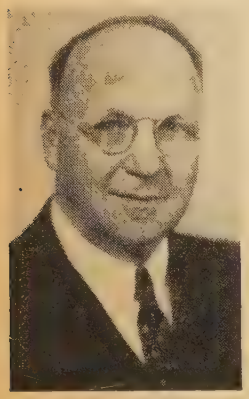
(Continued on page 280)

Christ, the Chief Cornerstone

By CHARLES T. HOLMAN

Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.—Eph. 2:20.

THIS morning we have laid the cornerstone of our new building. As we contemplate the significance of what we have done we feel somewhat awed, and we say from our hearts, "It is the Lord's doing, and wonderful in our eyes."



There is much more to a building than the cornerstone. There is the foundation which already has been laid; there are the bricks and stone and steel which go to form the superstructure. But the cornerstone, lying at the foundation of a principal angle of a building, is of fundamental importance, since upon it rest the other stones which form the superstructure.

While rejoicing that this beautiful edifice, to be dedicated to the worship of God and the service of men, is now being pushed to completion, we must remind ourselves that the building of a spiritual temple of God to inhabit the physical structure is much more important. It will be vain and useless if this is only another building, however lovely—as useless as a dead body uninhabited by a living spirit. We must build a vital and spiritual community, quick to respond to the impulses of him who is the Head of the church, if our labor is not to be in vain.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

This is what the apostle is speaking about in the Scripture which we have taken as a text. The living church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets—upon the work of all those who have labored so earnestly and sacrificed so greatly—and is to be completed by those dedicated persons who are, as Peter's first epistle says, living stones in a living temple, based upon the living Lord, who is the chief cornerstone.

In this living temple, then—this Christian community which is to inhabit the building we erect—Christ must be the chief cornerstone. Unless our life and work are built upon him the entire structure will be insecure. This is a Christian church, not just a clubhouse or a social center or a humanitarian agency devoted to good works. It is a church in which we shall worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which we shall hope to gain increasing insight into the will and purpose of God as made known in Christ, in which we shall hope to clarify the meaning of the Christian life, and in which we shall call for dedication to the high purposes to which Christ dedicated his own life. Christ will be the chief cornerstone.

How much the message and work of a church so founded are needed in our day is all too evident. In a sermon preached about a year ago, Dr. Ralph Sockman quoted J. Edgar Hoover as saying that in a recent year 108,787 young people under 21 in the United States were arrested for crimes requiring fingerprinting, that a murder was committed every 40 minutes and a major crime every 22 seconds. "Yet, with all these symptoms of moral illness," Dr. Sockman went on to say, "our citizens show such apathy that millions do not trouble to vote. While some 51 per cent of our population claim church affiliation, only 28 per cent could be called church attendants, and only 8 per cent are in church on a typical Sunday. Our people give about $2 billion annually for all charities, including church support, but they spend $8,700,000,000 for alcoholic drinks, i.e., $89 for every person over 18 years of age." Think of these facts and then recall a carefully documented study published by the *Ladies Home Journal* not long ago which depicted the smug satisfaction of the American people about their own religious attitudes. Most people said that they believed in God and that they thought they met the obligations of the Christian religion rather well. It only shows how far short they came of any real understanding of the overwhelming and uncompromising demands made upon them by the Christian ethic.

But that was in the United States. Well, is the situation any better here than in the homeland of most of us? Are moral standards higher? Is church loyalty greater? Is Christian devotion more sincere? I shall not even try to answer those questions—you know the answers as well as I. But I will say this: it would be a tragic thing if, with all the unfortunate social pressures of many sorts which impinge upon our children, they were allowed to grow up without Christian education, if young people were left without the guiding influence of the church, and if adults were not constantly reminded of eternal values and called to high dedication by the one institution responsible for the promotion of Christian living. If we should be left without opportunity for that inspiring and life-enriching worship of God which the church provides, our lives would be immeasurably poorer, and the consequences in the disintegration of character might be disastrous.

It is my deep conviction, then, that in the building

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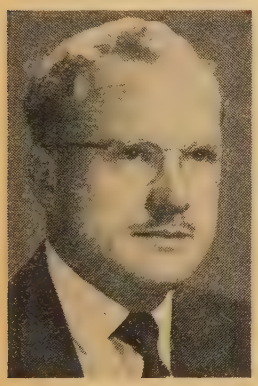
of this spiritual temple—that is, the Christian community that is to inhabit the structure for which we laid the cornerstone today—we must in most uncompromising fashion make Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone. We must build upon his revelation of God as a loving Father whose purpose it is that his children shall live together in brotherliness and good will; upon his view of man as a creature of infinite worth, weak and sinful though he be; upon his conviction that the good life is one of inner purity of motive which will reveal itself in worthy deeds; upon his assurance that our broken lives can be made whole through faith in God, who graciously forgives and spiritually renews the lives of those who trust him. If we fail to make Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone and to rear the structure of our shared life upon him, we may be sure that, whatever degree of institutional success we may achieve, our efforts will, in the end, come to naught. But if we do make our lives living stones in the living temple of our living Lord, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, God will surely bless us and use us.

Bigoted Bildad

By R. C. PLANT

HAVE you ever met a man who thinks that only he knows the will of God? He interprets the Scriptures to suit himself and insists that he is right. Because he is obstinately and intolerently devoted to his own church, party, belief or opinion, we call him a bigot. Such a man was Bildad, one of Job's friends.



Jehovah had permitted the Adversary to test Job since the Adversary thought cynically that men were good only for the material benefits they reaped from being good. Job had lost his children, his servants, his oxen, all that he had, but he could not be induced to curse God.

Job's three comforters came for miles to be with him, at much personal sacrifice. They were the type of people who preferred creeds above men. They thought all that God does is obvious and easily explained. They were gentlemen, though. As guests, following the custom of the times, they waited for their host to speak first, and Job thought for a week before he said a word. Seven days they sat there in silence. Then Job's first speech was a protest against his evil fortune, cursing the day of his birth and complaining that he didn't die in infancy.

Eliphaz, probably the oldest of the three, spoke first. He was pompous; he counseled Job to repent and submit. He started with the idea that innocent men don't perish. Job replied with ill humor, "I know I'm innocent and it looks as if I'm perishing!"

Then came Bildad, bigoted Bildad. He was not a man given to thinking; he just quoted other people. He was exasperated with Job. He insisted that God, being righteous, will not make the righteous suffer, and the presence of suffering proves the unrighteousness of him who suffers. Not only was Bildad bigoted, he was tactless—a terrible combination. In the third verse of chapter eight, Bildad starts to prove the righteousness of God by citing the destruction of Job's children. He doesn't draw the conclusion, however. Perhaps Zophar nudged him. At any rate, he changes his approach and starts talking about what Job should do.

Job's answer to Bildad is the first step along the road that we Christians must travel in understanding the suffering of righteous people. Job said that there was a time when he was favored by God; why the change? We must come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a discriminating moral providence in the universe; it rains on the just as well as the unjust.

EVIL NOT FROM GOD

If there is one lesson the book of Job teaches us, it is this: God is not the author of suffering and evil. Whatever happens, don't blame God for it. He neither causes evil nor likes to see it happen. This world has evil in it, owing to man's free will and the presence of evil things, but God is not the author of evil.

The problem of why the wicked prosper has been closely connected to the question of why the righteous suffer. Jeremiah wonders, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" At first men thought that suffering was the divinely appointed consequence of sin. That's what Bildad thought; and he was wrong. Many people sin and don't suffer, and many people suffer without its being a result of particular sins. Habbakuk comes to the conclusion that we are to judge Providence not by the stages along the way, but by the ultimate goal. And even in a world where righteous men suffer, it is possible for the righteous man to have an inner victory.

The only real victory over suffering is a spiritual victory, as Psalm 73 points out. James (5:13) approaches this idea when he writes, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." James would not have us

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pray for release from suffering on the grounds that we are righteous. Rather he counsels us to pray for strength to withstand our suffering. "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator," as Peter explained it.

Suffering would seem to be part of this world's life, visited upon righteous and unrighteous alike, with no determination of God. God can use suffering, if he wishes, to test piety or develop character, but God cannot be the author of anything save good. Through the strength of the Christian gospel, the inner victory over suffering can be great, for we know that the evil which befalls the body is nothing compared to the evil that may torment the soul.

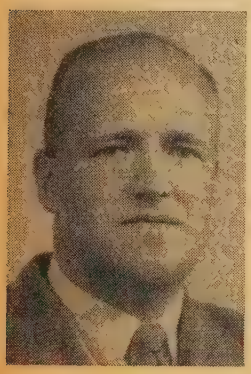
Paul, when writing Timothy, instructed his young friend that "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us." Paul was probably referring to suffering in behalf of our belief, not to suffering because of the sin of the world. But we know that if we withstand suffering through the faith that is in us, we will have the ultimate victory, reigning with Christ. Longfellow put it in unforgettable verse:

> Oh, fear not in a world like this,
> And thou shalt know erelong—
> Know how sublime a thing it is
> To suffer and be strong.

'Full-Time' Christian Service

ALLAN EASTON

DURING THE PAST few months it has been my privilege to travel fairly extensively on two shores of the Pacific basin. One of the smaller things which has struck me forcibly has been the manner in which certain types of "jargon" become prevalent on different areas, expressions coming into popular use which have one meaning for those who are familiar with them and quite another for the stranger who is not.



An obvious example is the word "liberation," which has become very common piece of "jargon" in Communist China. To those of us who have lived there the word has one meaning and one meaning only. The "liberation" of a city is the day upon which the Communist armies arrived to take over control. When we use the phrase to one another we know that this is what we are referring to and that we are not making any judgment of value. At the same time it will be obvious that, when speaking carelessly to those who are not familiar with the significance of our choice of words, we lay ourselves open to grave misunderstanding.

There is another phrase which appears to be common both in the United States and in Canada. This is the use of the expression "full-time Christian service." This expression has become a piece of technical "jargon." It means "professional church work." To seek to encourage men "to take full-time Christian service" is to try and recruit them for the ranks of the ministry.

The phrase means that and nothing more. For the sake of illustration, however, let us analyze it for a moment and see what it suggests to the uninitiated. What it implies is that the only "full-time" servants of Christ are ministers and others engaged in professional church work. All the rest are apparently "part-time" servants of their Master. They serve Him in so far as they teach in the Sunday school, sing in the choir, take up the offering, or are responsible for some other branch of specific "church" work. The rest of their lives they spend doing things which are of a lesser degree of importance, things which indeed are quite vital to the continued existence of human society, but things which nonetheless are not quite Christian.

Of course nobody who uses the expression really means that—or do they? The very fact that such a vicious phrase is possible casts a revealing light on our present day church life. It discloses our tendency to professionalize the Christian religion and to assume that the only full way of serving God is to enter the ranks of the ministry or to take up some other form of "church" work. How often we hear it taken for granted that that is the natural outlet for our religiously enthusiastic young people. "He is a keen Christian, so of course he will go to seminary"—as though a theological training were the one and only way of learning how to do effective Christian work. There is not a little truth in the cynical comment that many people appear to regard the clerical collar as a halo which has somehow slipped out of place!

Related to this is our tendency to assume that the laymen's best Christian service has to be rendered in what we might call specifically "church" activities. We overlook the significance of the fact that the first intimation of the birth of Christ was made to shepherds and not to priests, made not in the temple but in the fields to men who were doing a simple and rather dull job, but doing it presumably as in the presence of God. We forget that the man whom our Master commended most highly for his faith was a centurian, a layman of some small authority who accepted that authority as a trust received from his Maker.

ALLAN EASTON wrote his last sermon for The Pulpit *on the occasion of the fall of Peiping, where he was pastor of Union Church. He is now executive secretary of the Honolulu council of churches. This sermon was delivered before an interdenominational gathering in that city.*

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Let me make my position very clear. Not for one moment am I minimizing the high office of the Christian ministry, nor am I denying the importance of good Sunday school teachers and choir singers. But what I am saying is that, along with these things, the greatest need of our time is for consecrated laymen and laywomen, laymen and laywomen who accept their daily work—be it in the home, the office, the shop, the factory or the field—as a service done unto God. I am afraid that those of us who are engaged in professional church work are all too apt to forget that those who are called upon to bear witness in other spheres have a task which is in many respects both more difficult and more signicant than ours.

We are all of us called upon to be "full-time" servants of Christ. If we really took that seriously, we should discover that we had in our hands a critique of modern society infinitely more revolutionary than anything which the Communist party has ever been able to produce. It would affect our decisions as to the kind of jobs which we should wish to undertake ourselves or to ask others to undertake, and as to the conditions under which they should be undertaken. It would transform an attitude towards our work and give us a sense of purpose which is all too often lacking today. Above all it would give new meaning to our worship and we should find in the Sacrament of Communion, that most material and yet most spiritual of rites, a significance and power of which few of us have as yet even dreamed.

The story is told of a certain evangelist who was talking to a companion on a train. He asked him what he did for God.

"I bake," was the reply.

"I know, but what do you do for God?"

Again the answer came, "I bake."

"I know that you bake for your living, but what do you do for God?"

"I bake for God." He was right, and all of us, whatever our work may be, need to learn the same truth and to give expression to it with the same determined conviction.

A Prayer

(Continued from page 275)

tribulations have come and where a new light of faith may shine brightly as once it did long ago;

Of the church in seething Asia—in China where a new environment has come, in Japan where new life is pulsing forth, in India and Africa where new days demand a strong and fearless witness;

Of the church in South America where its future can be great and important in spite of the struggles now;

Of the church right here at home where sharing and sacrificing must become flesh and dwell among us—among us upon whom rests a great responsibility and privilege.

Thus do we pray for the World Church and for all Christians everywhere. Thus do we give and sacrifice with our brethren, our God, sharing one another's burdens, and, we do pray, never becoming weary in well-doing. Amen.

Man's Selenic Nature

By MORRIS L. KIRK
Haverford, Pennsylvania

IN THE field of chemistry there is a substance known as selenium, which has a peculiar property in connection with conducting electricity. If not exposed to light it acts as an insulator, but as soon as light shines on it, current passes very readily through it, thus making it a conductor.

The human race is a multitude of fragments of selenium scattered over the face of God's creation. Most of us are insulators; some are conductors of varying degrees of quality. We vary according to our degree of illumination. None of us are alike, except in our ability to conduct current once we have our beings exposed to the Divine Sun. The mechanism of our existence is such that the more conductors we have, the more complete a circuit is maintained. The light may thus pass from one to another without interference. Soon, with increased flow of current, some of these conductors begin to glow and then the whole world becomes more beautiful, like a lighted Christmas tree. The individuals who are sufficiently of a conductor nature to glow, soon reflect in their neighbors enough light, with the help of the Sun, so that more and more conductors of increased efficiency are being formed.

It would be a pleasant scene indeed if the selenium midgets moved forever in the direction of more efficient transmission of that power made possible by the Sun's illumination. Unfortunately this is not the case. Witness the darkness when these bits of selenium pull their cloaks of self-righteousness about them, muttering to themselves and to their fellows that they are sufficint unto themselves and that they need not the Sun to carry on the work for which they are fitted. It is analogous to the effect obtained by the play "Gas Light." The lights grow dim and a certain feeling of uncertainty invades the scene. The illumination of the whole world begins to fade.

It is natural that this world has an occasional cloud in the sky which briefly shades first one bit of selenium and then another. It does no serious damage to the whole effect. However, when storm clouds appear and are so extensive as to cover the whole face of the sun, gradually the reflections here on earth begin to fade; some go out completely. When the storm breaks and the rain is driven unmercifully into the ground beneath, some of these selenium midgets, which a few minutes ago seemed to be very bright, do not even emit steam when the great drops strike. They go out almost immediately and become much as their fellows around them, who hadn't glowed in the first place.

And after the storm has passed and the face of the sun itself can be seen in full glory, there is a great calm. With the help of the infinite sun the fragments of selenium gradually become dried out, and soon conduction takes place again. Current begins to flow much as before. The rain from the storm seems to have bathed the surfaces so that greater degrees of reflection of the sun are now possible.

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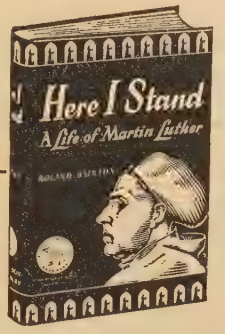

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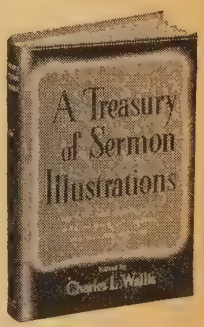

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'Standin' in the Need of Prayer'

By CHESTER E. CUSTER

Pastor, The Methodist Church, Renwick, Iowa

THE OLD NEGRO spiritual has taken a scientific turn. Dr. Harold C. Urey, one of America's leading nuclear physicists and discoverer of the hydrogen atom of Weight 2, said recently: "No man knows if the hydrogen bomb will work. I hope it doesn't. But there is no way of controlling nature. Sometimes it is too cooperative. Frankly I'm scared to death. Sometimes I feel prayer is the only solution, and I wish I had a direct line to the Almighty to ask him for guidance." What has led us to believe that we cannot ask the Almighty for guidance? What we probably mean is that we can, but that it will make little difference.

I recently reread Paul's letters to the Thessalonian Church. The Christians of his day were also living under tension. They too were awaiting a catastrophe. The only difference between their waiting and ours is that theirs promised hope—a cataclysmic overthrow of the present world order with the coming of Christ—whereas our waiting foreshadows doom—the cataclysmic destruction of the world with the coming of the hydrogen bomb.

Paul's classification of "the waiters" sounds quite modern. There were those who were overtaken with fear; Paul tells them to "stand firm." Others were busybodies, idling their time away; Paul warns them to "get busy." A third group was looking ahead with confidence and Paul encourages them by saying, "God bless you; pray constantly." The fearful, the idlers, the confident! A better world has never come about through idlers nor at the hands of the fearful. The future belongs to men of confidence, men of God, men of prayer.

More and more we are forced to the conclusion of America's patron saint, Abraham Lincoln: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day." Unfortunately, the United Nations organization has felt that it could get along without prayer. To be sure, each annual assembly is opened and closed with a silent minute-long nod to God, but Manhattan's "tower of strength" is not built upon prayer. Our high hopes and still higher buildings may be only towers of Babel. Those ancient builders, so contemporaneous, said, "Let *us* build and penetrate God himself," but all ended in confusion because God was left out. We split the atom and thereby fathom the mysteries of God's universe; we build great hopes; we face universal destruction—all without God. The prayer of Joseph Auslander composed for United Nations Day this year should be engraved on the cornerstone of the United Nations secretariat building, but more explicitly engraved upon every human heart.

> O nations, build a house that stands
> On faith—but build with more than hands;
> Build it with more than steel and stone;
> With heart's blood build it, with heart's bone.
>
> And build it with tears, prayers, dreams, desires,
> That peace to which man's soul aspires;
> Build in the strength of God's endeavor
> This house of all our hope forever.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

LESTER R. VINING, First Congregational, Toledo, Ohio. "Built His House Upon the Rock," a meditation on vanishing illusions. Matt. 7:24—"Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

ROBERT O. LAASER, Zion Evangelical and Reformed, Wathena, Kan. "An Inside Job." Mark 7:20—"And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man."

FRANCIS C. ELLIS, Community, San Dimas, Calif. "God's Songs in Strange Places." Ps. 137:4—"How shall we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?"

JESSE LYONS, Methodist, Summit, N. J. "Limits of Freedom." II Cor. 3:15—"Where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

EDWARD MAYER, Evangelical and Reformed, Antigo, Wis. "Evil in God's World." Matt. 13:26—"When the blade sprouted and formed the kernel, then the weeds appeared as well."

WALLACE FRIDY, Bethel Methodist, Spartanburg, S. C. "What Are You Standing For?" Matt. 7:13-14—"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

K. MORGAN EDWARDS, First Methodist, Glendale, Calif. "The Case for Conscience." John 1:9—". . . the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

CHARLIE W. SHEDD, First Presbyterian, Ponca City, Okla. "The Beauty of a Partial Knowledge." I Cor. 13:9—"For we know in part."

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Pulpit Post

Pulpit's Concern

SIR: May I suggest that you consider the function of your magazine before planning any significant changes. I subscribe to one magazine because it covers the area of church administration, to another for denominational news and current theological views, and to The Pulpit because it covers the preaching area of my work. I know of no magazine concerned entirely with worship. The Pulpit might well concern itself with preaching and worship, leaving other areas of pastoral interest to other periodicals.

I do miss "Unpublished Sermons" and I continue to see no point in "Titles and Texts." Otherwise, The Pulpit is just fine.

Congregational Church, Tewksbury, Mass. HUGO A. BOURDEAU.

They Like Us

SIR: I was much impressed by the July issue. I enjoy knowing a little more about each man than space allowed in your former method of giving biographical data. And I like "Pulpit Calendar." It will help me do an educational job in my church during the next year. We have not been particularly conscious of the Christian church year in the past.

Orthodox Congregational, Ashby, Mass. WILLIAM B. HOWENSTINE.

SIR: . . . As a theological student, let me tell you what a great help your wonderful periodical of preaching is to me in my church work.

South Congregational, Brockton, Mass. CHARLES W. BARNES, JR.

The Eternal Gospel and the Preacher

By LYLE OSBORNE BRISTOL

THE modern minister is expected to have a diversity of gifts. Among other things he must be a preacher, a pastor, an administrator and a good mixer. But with all these requirements laid upon him, the first question usually asked by a pulpit committee is, "Can he preach?" Thus, while recognizing these other necessities, I want to discuss the minister's task as preacher in this modern age.

The people to whom we preach—and we ourselves—present a paradox in thinking and living. On the one hand, there is a search for security and stability. Social security with all its varied provisions is ever before us. Stability is proudly claimed by the business firm whose letterhead lists the date of establishment of the business and proclaims that through boom and depression this firm has remained solvent. The cornerstone contains the date of the erection of the building, with the implication that the foundation was well and truly laid. In churches we observe the passing of the years with appropriate anniversary celebrations.

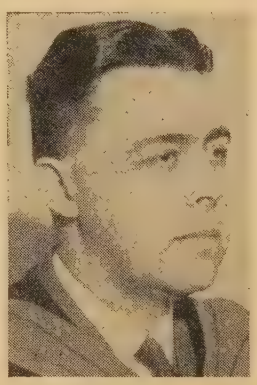
But, on the other hand, there is a desire for change and movement. We want to wear the latest fashions in clothing; we want to drive the latest model automobiles; we can even buy magazines today that bear a date yet to come. We are eager to be up to date.

Now all this may be self-evident, but it poses certain problems for the preacher. In his preaching he must recognize these two elements. He has an eternal gospel to proclaim—a gospel that has stood the tests of time far better than empires, economic and political. But he must make this eternal gospel real to his own day. In order to do this he must face and deal with at least three problems.

● *Simplicity of Interpretation*

The first of these problems is simplicity of interpretation. In the field of science, it is to be expected that there will be talk about nuclear fission, isotopes, chain reactions, and many other things that are no more than words to most of us. A scientific journal will contain articles that convey nothing to the man outside the training and experience of the laboratory. But all this becomes real to us when it is interpreted in terms of the wonders of radar and television or the horrors of atom and hydrogen bombs. For instance, I may be told that by pressure and release controls set in a definite way the fluid in the tubes of a refrigerator will lower the temperature in the various compartments. But the matter becomes much more real to me when I see a demonstration of the freezing capacity of the refrigerator.

Likewise, in the field of economics we hear discussions of balance of trade, inequality of foreign exchange, devaluation of currency, and many other things that mean little to us. But we do know that there are not enough dollars for the things we want and sometimes not enough for the things we need. This is where we understand the matter of economics.



The same is true in the realm of our faith. Ministers are expected to know the theological terms of Christian thought. We can discuss the Arian controversy, Logos Christology, apocalyptic eschatology, the tenets of humanism, the theology of crisis, and many other such matters. But the essential thing is to take our theology with its roots in our experience of faith and make that theology simple enough that our people understand and enter into the same deep experience. This is a prime requirement for the modern preacher. While it is often difficult to find suitable books in the field of religion for our people to read, it is even more difficult to get others to read those that are available. Here, then, is a great opportunity for the preacher. Blessed is he who seizes it with all the ability and training at his command!

● *Timeliness a Necessity*

The second problem for the preacher is relevance or timeliness. Language changes with the passing of the years, requiring that older concepts be explained in modern terms. Scientists do not use language of a distant past, but constantly employ modern ways of stating their findings. Economists change their language to meet the needs of a world of steadily diminishing size.

So it must be also in preaching. The gospel of Jesus Christ has its roots in a land and age different from our own. But it must be made relevant to our age and environment. Otherwise, the preacher is negligent of the needs of his people, for he gives the uneasy impression that Christianity is not intellectually respectable in the modern world.

For example, it is to be deplored that few people read the Bible consistently or intelligently. Is this wholly because of lack of time or is it because of interest in other things? Could it not be in part at least due to the format in which the King James Version usually appears, with fine print, two columns to a page, and archaic words? This is not an attempt to discredit the magnificence of the King James Version with its recognized influence on the English-speaking world. But are we not in danger of losing an informed church membership because of an excessive reverence for one version of the English Bible? The greatest hope along this line in recent years has been the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament with its fine format and clearer language. This ought to be highly recommended to all Christians.

Moreover, in preaching, we must use language that belongs to our time and not to a remote past. This means keeping abreast of the thinking of our time by wide reading and by intimate knowledge of the lives men live today. After all, we have as our ideal the One whose words were so vivid and so timely that those who heard him declared that no one had ever spoken as he spoke.

LYLE OSBORNE BRISTOL is the son of a Canadian Baptist minister. Educated in Canada and the United States, he spent six years as a pastor in Ontario before accepting the pastorate of the Baptist Church of the Redeemer, Brooklyn, New York.

The third problem of the preacher concerns not only his preaching but the whole impression he gives. This is the problem of persuasion. We know scientists who are so immersed in their devotion to research that they impress young people with the importance of a career in science. We know businessmen who are so interested in their business that they are able to influence others to enter the same business.

We in the Christian ministry must not take second place to any of these. We ought to be concerned that our impression upon others is such that they are led to a desire not only to become Christians but also to become ministers. There is a dire need for young people of personality and intellect to be so aware of the importance of Christian leadership that they will devote their lives to Christ and his cause. In all this the preacher can take the lead. He must cultivate qualities of persuasion that will bear fruit in recruits to carry on his work in this and the next generation.

In such a discussion as this, I am not minimizing the work of the Christian preacher. Rather, so vital is that work that it must not be allowed to decline in any way through negligence or lack of training. The eternal gospel, rooted as it is in the past, must be put into simple terms for today so that it may be grasped by as many as possible. The eternal gospel, rooted as it is in the past, must be made relevant to the needs of modern living. The eternal gospel, rooted as it is in the past, must so challenge the loyalty of people today that its transforming power may remake our world. To proclaim that gospel the Christian preacher is called.

From the Horns of the Unicorns

By CATHERINE HERZEL

IT WAS Palm Sunday, the morning church service. We read the introit for the day:

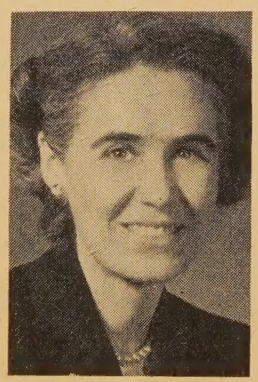
"Be not Thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me.

"Save me from the lion's mouth: and deliver me from the horns of the unicorns."

The horns of the unicorns! The words startled me as if I had never before heard them. I certainly needed to be delivered from many things, but unicorns had not been among the dangers of which I was conscious. Was this only a meaningless phrase preserved by tradition, or was it a symbol still capable of carrying overtones of meaning, which is the purpose of symbolism? I began to think, not only of symbolism (and decided that the unicorns had a place in 1950), but also of the meaning of the liturgical service that had been a part of my religious life for as long as I could remember.

Now this article is not an argument. I hold no brief for the idea that a liturgical service of worship is the only valid form, or that it is the most desirable. This is simply an attempt to put into words what the service means to one worshiper.

Nor am I approaching the matter as an aesthetic experience. A formal service of worship in a large, beautiful church, with a great organ and an excellent choir certainly must be satisfying aesthetically. I have never belonged to that kind of church. I have worshiped in churches where we congratulate ourselves if the music is not so poor as to be a distraction. Here are no solemn processions of vested choirs, but a little group of singers who have had scant training and quite probably no rehearsal. The finest music in my kind of church is apt to be the voices of the congregation reading or praying together in heart-warming unison.



No, it is not as an artistic exercise that the liturgy has meant so much to me, but as a vehicle for some of the deepest springs of living.

A Sense of Participation

First of all, the liturgical service gives words to the inarticulate. We who sit in the pew are as necessary to the carrying on of such a service as is the minister, because its very nature compels our participation. We respond, we pray aloud, we sing, we shout—in a perfectly decorous way. Timid as we are about talking of anything that really matters to us, in our service we sing quite openly, "Lord have mercy on us." There is an outlet for our Christian joy, too—"Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory." Those are my emotions, and here, in the service, is the one time and place that I can find words for them.

The very familiarity of the responses enables us to place on them the freight of our varied needs and emotions. There are times when there are feelings in our own experience that we cannot fully comprehend, times when mind and spirit are exhausted by inner turmoil, when we are oppressed by sins we do not understand. If our life depended on it—and it does—we could not put our feelings into words, but we pray, "O most merciful God, who hast given Thine only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us, and for his sake grant us remission of all our sins: and by Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee, and of Thy will, and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end that by Thy grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." The words carry the burden of our thoughts and yearnings, and we feel a sense of release, a sense of renewed strength that enables us to take heart and go on to meet the day's problems and temptations.

A Sense of Confession

Perhaps it is possible to have a Christian service of worship in which sin is not mentioned either in sermon, hymns or prayers, but not in the liturgical service. The very first section is entitled "The Confession of Sins." The minister says, "Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness."

Any act of worship which has touch with reality for the heart of modern man must somehow face this sense of sin. I suppose there are many of my generation whose first experience with the inescapability of human sin came with the Hitlerian cruelties. We had been raised in a kindly world, most of us, in which it was quite possible to evade the sense of sin. My own first nonevasion came with the experiences

(Continued on page 286)

CATHERINE (Mrs. F. B.) HERZEL is the wife of the pastor of St. Petersburg, Florida, Lutheran Parish. She is a member of the town and country committee of the Home Missions Council. Co-authored with her husband To Thee We Sing, *a book about hymns.*

Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

● *God Cares for His Own*

WHY doesn't God take care of his own? The answer is that he does! He cannot give to finite minds the wisdom of the Infinite. He cannot make a petted brotherhood of those who claim to do his will a little better than their fellows do his will. And he cannot give us at the same time the privilege of freedom and the security of bondage, a universe at once dependable and yet subject to unpredictable change, the blessings of society and the safety of isolation from society. But through the night and through the day, through youth and through age, through joy and through sorrow, through life and through death, God's love is with us as we go.

He cannot force his love upon us; for we are his people, not his puppets. But to them who turn to him he gives the power of the peace which passes understanding and the life that overcomes the world. He gives the wisdom and the will to make all things work together for good. He gives the only assurance which in times like these is worthy of the name at all: the assurance that no blow of pain or depth of sorrow, no loss of health or death of loved ones, no circumstances of living or manner of dying, no tragedy of earth or cataclysm of the worlds beyond the earth, shall be able to separate us from his power, from his care, from his love.—*Roy M. Pearson, Hancock Congregational, Lexington, Mass.*

● *Gandhi's Method of Dealing with Enemies*

I HAVE been impressed by the stories of the consummate practicality with which the mystic Mahatma Gandhi attacked his opponents. Devadas Gandhi said his father's greatest contribution was "his candor and his courtesy." During the years of India's rebellion against England, whenever Gandhi planned to move against anyone he would first send that person a copy of his proposed statement, asking for the correction of any errors. The result was that the mahatma's speeches, when he made them, were so disconcertingly truthful that his opponent was obliterated.

To attack an opponent in such a way overcomes the opposition, so that the opponent is no longer an enemy but a friend. So it is indeed a practical strategy to use against an opponent never to "bear false witness against your neighbor." If you are going to say something against him, be kindly, wholly accurate and never false. Then the bridge over which you march to attack may some day become a bridge over which you return with a friend, for your bridge of words is straight and true and strong.—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

● *Emerson's Words Still True*

THESE words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, written in 1838, are especially timely today: "What greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate or the market. Literature becomes frivolous. Science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, age is without honor, society lives to trifles, and when men die we do not mention them!"—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

● *Christian Gospel Goes Far Beyond Marxism*

"THE Christian gospel goes far beyond Marxism in meeting the needs of the world. It declares that there must be a reformation of individual character before we are fit to be citizens of God's kingdom. Experience has amply demonstrated that an order that is based only on economics and politics will create its own tensions and frictions. No matter how noble may be the Utopia that we erect, the human stuff of which it is composed will bring about its destruction."—John Sutherland Bonnell in WHAT ARE YOU LIVING FOR? (Abingdon Cokesbury Press)

● *Nations Depend On Individuals*

J. EDGAR HOOVER, director of the FBI, recently wrote in *This Week* magazine a short editorial entitled "The Challenge," and he used as his text the familiar passage from the book of Micah: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" He stated that those three simple phrases set up an indestructible guidepost for human conduct and established the essentials of decency, all of which are of the spirit—justice, mercy, humility. Mr. Hoover pointed out that the prophet's words are for the individual. "What," asks Micah, "is required of thee—the individual." The importance of those words lies, according to Mr. Hoover—and I agree with him—in the much neglected fact that nations are but the sum total of all the people. No nation grows in greatness save through the wisdom, determination and vision of the individual.—*Bradshaw Mintener, Vice-President and General Counsel, Pillsbury Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.*

● *Jesus Made Men Feel Uncommon*

ÉMILE Zola, the French novelist, once asked a friend why he was disliked by so many people. The friend replied: "Because you cannot talk two minutes with an imbecile without making him feel like an imbecile." The common people heard Jesus gladly because he made them feel uncommon. In his presence they felt like somebody, children of God and joint heirs with Christ.—*Ralph C. Lankler, First Presbyterian, Cortland, N.Y.*

● *'Just You And God'*

DURING the war I was chaplain to a group of air cadets. One day they made their first solo flight. One youngster came down all aglow. He told me of his experience: "At first I was afraid and wanted to jump out. I saw the propeller spinning as hard as it could and remembered that I too must do my best. Then I glanced at the wings resting on nothing but the arms of God and I remembered the old phrase I heard in Sunday school, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.' From that moment I knew nothing could happen to me. It's the most serene feeling in the world—to be way up there, just you and God."—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

From the Horns

(Continued from page 285)

I met in doing social work. There, dealing with people who were underprivileged in so many ways, sin could be explained away as due to ignorance or maladjustment, and the long-range goal of our work was to enlighten that ignorance or correct that maladjustment. And then that universal cruelty invaded our lives. The easy explanation shriveled in our minds before the incredible brutality that men used in their dealings with their fellow men. We were forced to realize the reality of willful sin. The pleasant walls of

our own environment were shattered beyond repair. Men are sinners. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Utter despair lay at the end of our thinking, unless we could find release in confessing our sins and being assured of the mercy of God. And make no mistake: it was our sin; not the sin of those removed from the human race, but sin in which we shared even as we shrank in revulsion from the recital of it. "Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer."

Thus shaken, we were not surprised when our thoughts turned inward to realize that we were guilty of sin in thought, word and deed, and, more dreadful, that the potential sinfulness of our own hearts was abysmal. We were sinners. It was no idle exercise in chanting but a cry from the bottom of our hearts that lay back of our response: "Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us."

And the sense of sins forgiven, of mercy obtained, came. With it came a new resolve. We sing, soberly, because it is a plea for continuing help from God, and joyfully, because it is a determination to live as in God's presence:

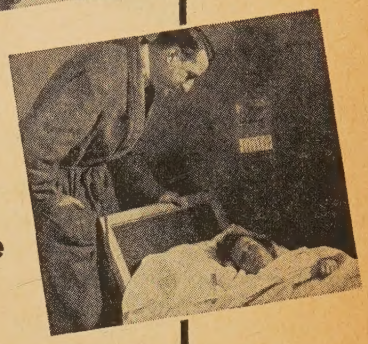
"Create in me a clean heart, O God:
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence:
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation:
And uphold me with Thy free Spirit."

A Sense of Community

From our participation in the service we receive a sense of community. There are some of us who are accompanied always by a sense of solitariness. No matter how great and satisfying is the joy of love and affection for our families and friends, there is always the sense that I am I, separate and alone. In the service I am alone, alone in the presence of God, and yet I am a part of the "we." At no time in my life do I feel such a strong sense of the common bond of humanity, so much a partaker in a common experience, as when we say together words that express our common needs and emotions.

How it strengthens Christian fellowship! There are individuals with whom it is difficult to maintain a sense of rapport. In other, plainer words, people we don't like. Here, worshiping together, is the clearest point of contact we have reached with them, and it sweetens and purifies our other contacts with them.

"I believe . . . in the holy Christian church, the communion of saints." In the service I know what that means: The saints sitting in the pews with me, the saints around the world, the saints of all the ages.



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